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REMARKS

Applicants request reconsideration and allowance of the present application in view of the foregoing amendments and the following remarks.

Claims 44-56 are now pending in the present application. Claims 44 and 56 are the independent claims.

Claim 56 is newly presented. Claims 44-55 have been amended. The amendments to claims 45-55 are solely to correct the dependencies of these claims. Support for the amendments to claim 44 and for new claim 56 can be found at least at, for example, page 3, line 33 - page 4, line 4, page 4, lines 18-25 and FIG. 1 of specification as originally filed. Thus, no new matter has been added.

Claims 42-55 stand rejected under the second paragraph 35 U.S.C. as indefinite. This rejection is respectfully traversed.

It is respectfully submitted that this rejection is fatally deficient. Firstly, the Office has failed to articulate a *prima facie* case since it does not explain how the claims as they were presented by the previous paper were unclear to one of ordinary skill in the art. In this regard, it is noted that the Office was able to examine all of the pending claims, *without qualification*. Further, any implied requirement that the specific structure of the electrostatic protection elements must be claimed to satisfy the definiteness requirement of § 112 is without basis in law or fact. Secondly, the rejection is prospective and conditional (e.g., "To the extent ..."). For these reasons alone, the rejection is traversed.

Nonetheless, for reasons unrelated to this rejection, various claims have been amended. It is respectfully submitted

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that the claims now even more fully satisfy the definiteness requirements of the second paragraph of 35 U.S.C. § 112.

Accordingly, favorable reconsideration and withdrawal of the rejection under 35 U.S.C. § 112 are respectfully requested.

Claims 44 to 52 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over U.S. Patent No. 6,556,409 (*Chittipeddi et al.*) in view of conventional input circuit illustrated in FIG. 14 of Applicants' disclosure (the conventional input circuit). This rejection is respectfully traversed.

Claim 44 now recites, *inter alia*, a plurality of electrostatic protection elements ... each electrostatic protection element including two transistors each of which forms part of a respective capacitor.

Applicants respectfully submit that neither of the asserted documents teaches or suggests at least the aforementioned features. Accordingly, without conceding the propriety of the asserted combination, it is submitted that the asserted combination is likewise deficient, even in view of the knowledge of one of ordinary skill in the art.

Briefly, the conventional input circuit teaches and/or suggests a single electrostatic protection element the transistors of which form a single capacitor while *Chittipeddi et al.* is silent as to the structure of any alleged electrostatic protection elements. Thus, the asserted combination fails to even suggest the aforementioned claim features.

The conventional input circuit includes a P-channel MOS transistor and an N-channel MOS transistor. These transistors, Applicants explain, comprise a capacitor that is an electrostatic protection element. (*Applicants' specification*, page 2, lines 1-5; Fig. 14).

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Absent from the conventional input circuit is any teaching or suggestion of:

- (1) transistors of an electrostatic protection element forming parts of different capacitors;
- (2) capacitors formed by transistors of different electrostatic protection elements; or even
- (3) plural capacitors.

This absence is not surprising since the conventional input circuit only uses a single electrostatic protection element.

*Chittipeddi et al.* discusses an integrated circuit including electrostatic discharge (ESD) circuits. Fig. 1a of *Chittipeddi et al.* illustrates two integrated circuits 5 and 10 that are coupled together via input and output (I/O) circuitry 20 to form a multi-chip module. Each of the integrated circuits 5 and 10 includes I/O circuitries 15 and 20 that may have electrostatic discharge (ESD) protection components (col. 3, lines 44-51).

*Chittipeddi et al.*, however, is silent as to any specific structure of the ESD protection components and, in particular, the aforementioned features of amended claim 44. In particular, this document is silent as to any electrostatic protective element as defined by the claims. Also, this patent is silent as to any transistors of respective alleged electrostatic protection elements forming different capacitors. Of course, this silence is not surprising since this patent seeks to provide selective ESD protection. (*Chittipeddi et al.*, Abstract).

For this reason alone, this rejection is traversed.

The rejection under 35 U.S.C. § 103 is traversed for another reason, however. The asserted combination does not even suggest plural electrostatic protective elements, as these elements are now defined by the claims.

As explained above, the conventional input circuit

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contemplates only one electrostatic protection element. Thus, this art cannot even suggest the aforementioned claim features.

*Chittipeddi et al.*, even assuming *arguendo* that the Office's characterization of this patent is not incorrect, still does not teach or suggest an arrangement that includes multiple electrostatic protection elements, as those elements are presently defined by the claims. Rather, this patent merely teaches that circuitry 15 or 20 "may in turn include electrostatic discharge (ESD) protection components." (*Chittipeddi et al.*, Col. 3, lines 49-51). This patent is silent as to the structure or physical interrelation of these components. Thus, for this additional reason, the rejection under 35 U.S.C. § 103 is respectfully traversed.

Accordingly, favorable reconsideration and withdrawal of the rejection of the claims under 35 U.S.C. § 103 are respectfully requested.

Lastly, Applicants respectfully submit that newly presented claim 56 patentably defines over the cited art at least for reasons similar to those presented herein. For example, at least the recitation of "electrostatic protection elements ... each ... including two transistors and that transistors of a same type and of respective electrostatic protection elements form respective capacitors" defines over the cited art.

In view of the foregoing, Applicants respectfully submit that the independent claims patentably define the present invention over the citations of record. Further, the dependent claims should also be allowable for the same reasons as their respective base claims and further due to the additional features that they recite. Separate and individual consideration of the dependent claims is respectfully requested.